

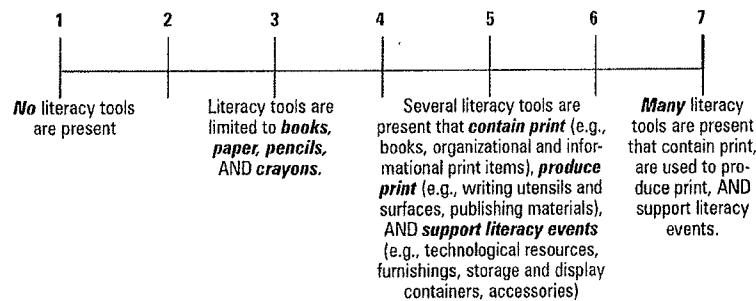
Literacy products

A concrete object or a demonstratable event that occurs as the result of interaction with literacy tools.

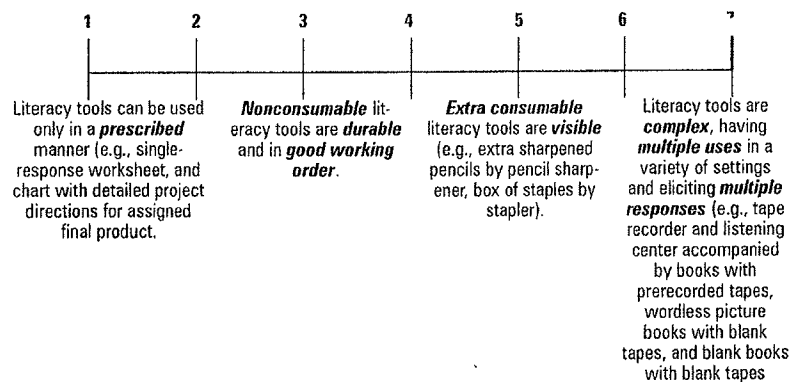
Literacy tools

Physical objects present in the environment which support the acquisition of literacy (e.g., paper, pencils, professionally published books and magazines, adult- and child-authored materials, computers, and bookshelves).

1. QUANTITY OF LITERACY TOOLS

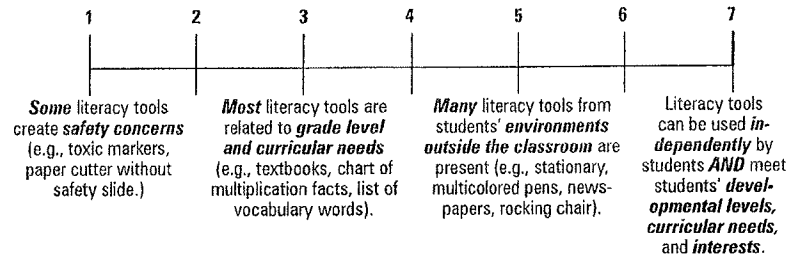


2. UTILITY OF LITERACY TOOLS

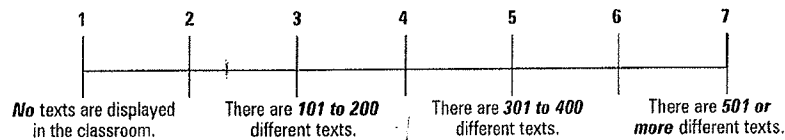


Environmental Profile

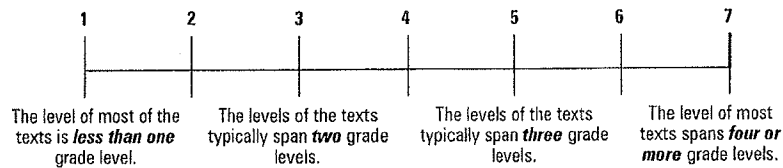
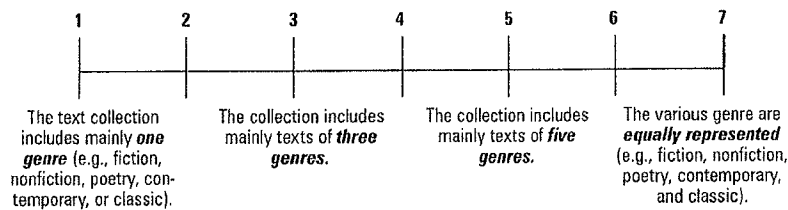
3. APPROPRIATENESS OF LITERACY TOOLS



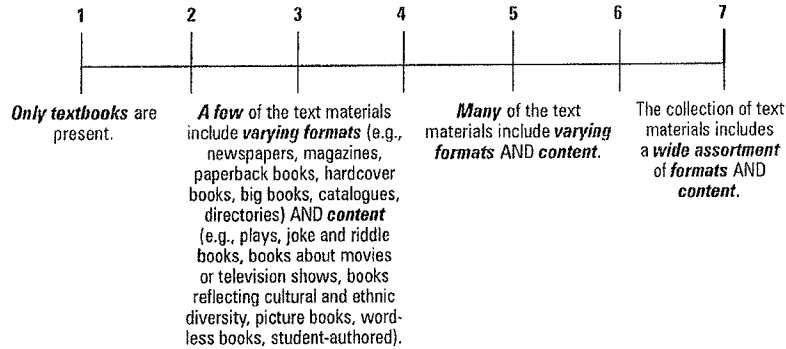
4. QUANTITY OF TEXT MATERIALS (including books, magazines, newspapers, etc.; count multiple copies as one)



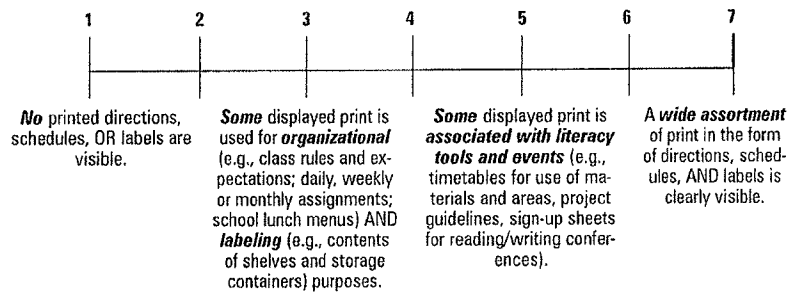
5. GENRES OF TEXT MATERIALS



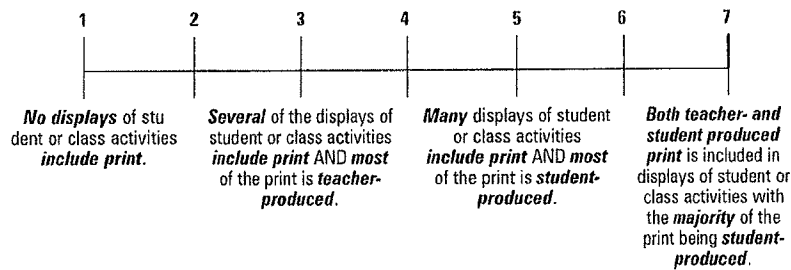
7. FORMAT AND CONTENT OF TEXT MATERIALS



8. PRINT USED FOR CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION

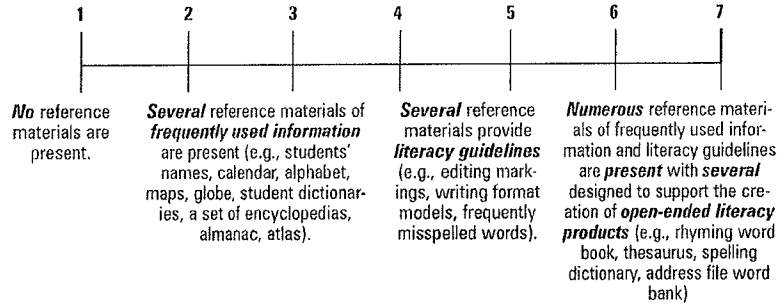


9. CLASSROOM LITERACY PRODUCT DISPLAYS

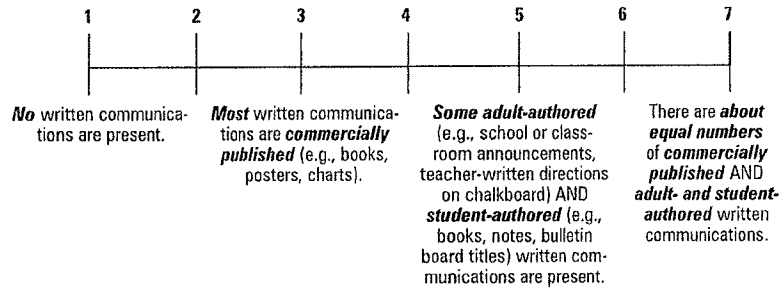


Environmental Profile

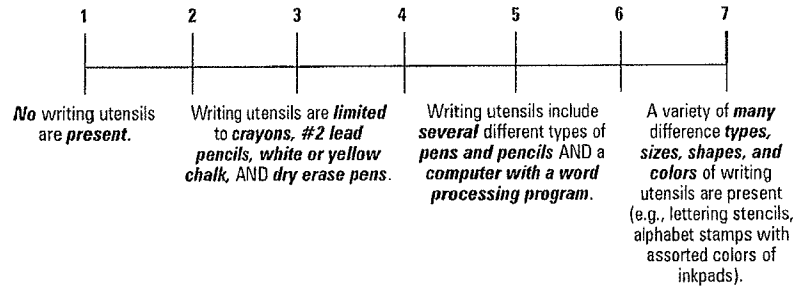
10. REFERENCE MATERIALS



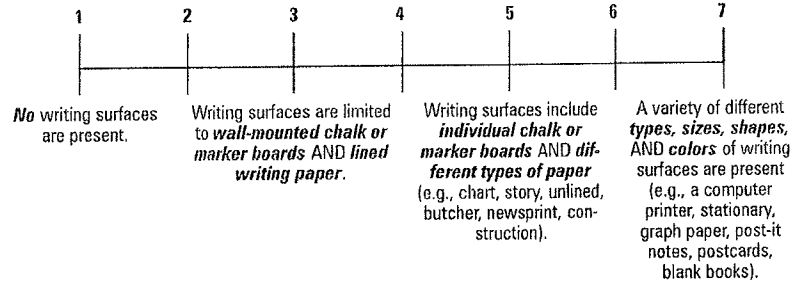
11. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS



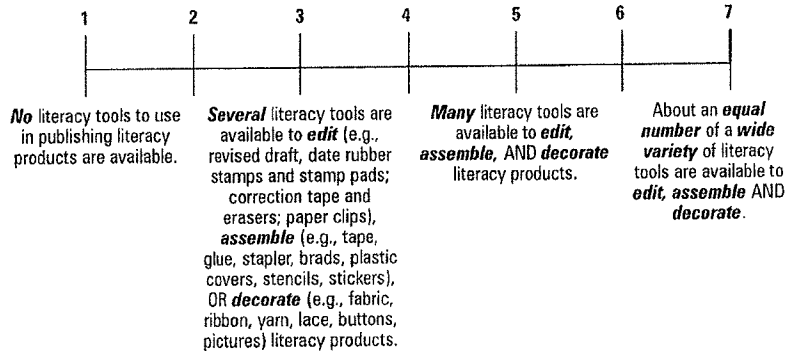
12. WRITING UTENSILS



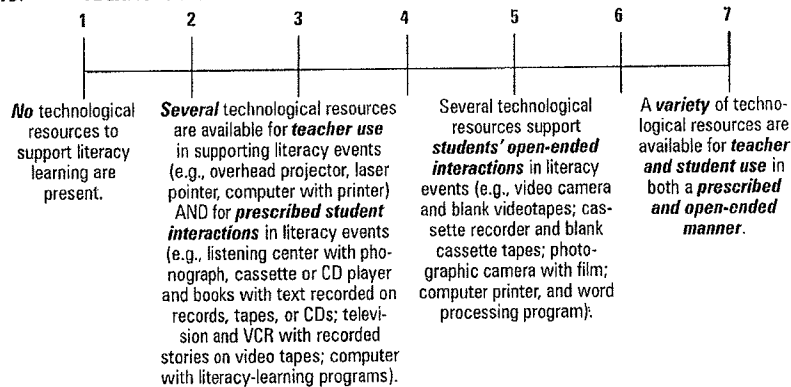
13. WRITING SURFACES



14. PUBLISHING MATERIALS

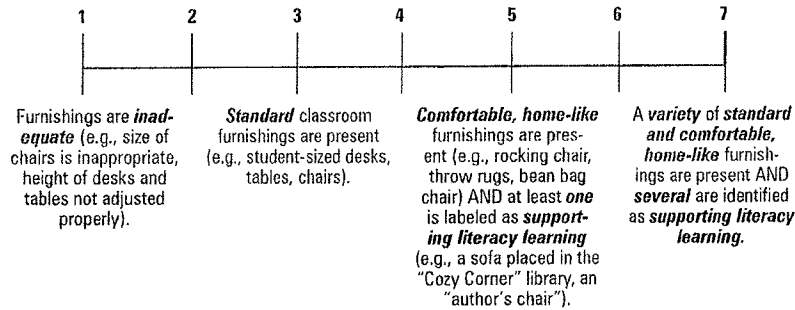


15. TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES TO SUPPORT LITERACY EVENTS

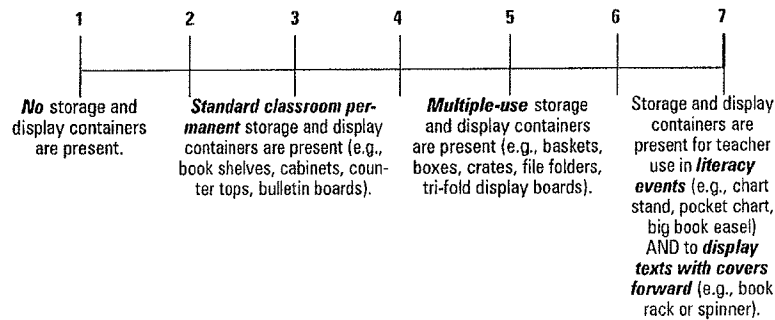


Environmental Profile

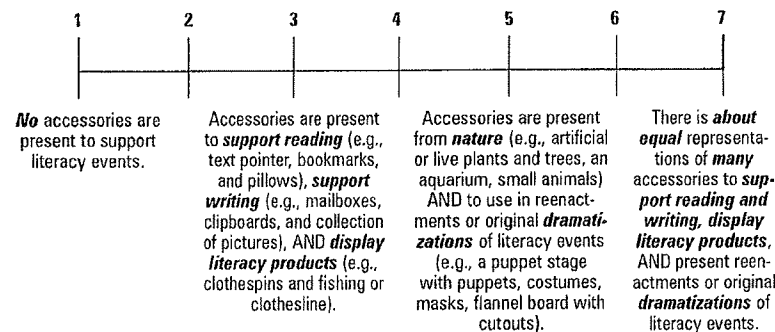
16. FURNISHINGS TO SUPPORT LITERACY EVENTS



17. STORAGE AND DISPLAY CONTAINERS TO SUPPORT LITERACY EVENTS



18. ACCESSORIES TO SUPPORT LITERACY EVENTS



Sample Questions for Deep Understandings

- What do you think is going to happen next? Can you identify something that helped you make that prediction?
- Are there things you know about your life, yourself, this author, or this kind of book that helps you to understand the story better? Explain.
- Tell your group, in just a few sentences, what your book is about.
- What do you think the author thinks is the most important part of the story/text so far? What clues did you notice that made you think this is so important?
- How is the text structured to help you understand it better? What has the author done with organization or text features to help you?

MG ELA RESEARCH BRIEF



North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
301 N. Wilmington Street, Raleigh, North Carolina

Summer 2007
(919) 807-3831 or 3953

NOTE: *The following Research Brief is an excerpted summary of a more complete research document prepared by a North Carolina public school teacher, 2006. The complete document is housed at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, the Division of Middle Grades and Secondary Education.*

Purpose

What does an adolescent literacy-rich environment look like?

To provide appropriate and useful choices for promoting literacy-rich environments research supports the following methodologies. For each, we have given overviews and tips for implementation.

- Paideia Seminar
- Literature Circles
- Teacher-Student Conferences
- Author's Circle
- Creating Independent Readers
- Grammar in Context

An effective classroom is a place where teachers and students come together with their different backgrounds, experiences, and abilities to create a dynamic community that fosters literacy.

- It must focus on the process (*how* students learn) and the content (*what* they learn).
- It involves teachers and students working and learning together.
- Teachers share in the role of learning rather than just the deliver of information to the learner.
- It establishes that interaction is key to providing purposeful ways for students to communicate.
- It is balanced with teacher guidance along with direct instruction to promote learner independence.

PAIDEIA SEMINAR

Overview

Adolescents are in the developmental stage where they enjoy challenging authority as well as questioning many aspects of society. The Paideia Seminar creates the environment where students are **encouraged** to tackle higher level questioning and thinking related to numerous concepts and topics.

Implementation

The teacher shares with the class the objectives and goals for the seminar. The teacher then provides background information and/or vocabulary that are needed to assist with the understanding of the text. Students are then given a copy of the text and are encouraged to take notes while the teacher reads the text a loud. When the reading is complete, the class is then opened for discussions. Students are lead to identify text's main idea, evaluate most important section(s), analyze the focus and details, and personalize and apply textual ideas. Teachers assess individual and/or group participation during discussions.

LITERATURE CIRCLES

Overview

When striving for students to write, read, and listen well, students must be given the opportunities to use the skills for authentic purposes. When laying the foundations for literature circles, it is recommended to begin slowly by providing clear modeling and guided practice of the components of literature circles. Begin the process by selecting a book accessible to the whole-class. This provides students the opportunity to develop the skills, strategies, and behaviors needed to conduct literature circles independently throughout the school year.

Implementation

When the class is ready to move toward working independently in literature circles, a suggested procedure is: at first, teacher provides copies of choices of texts from which each student selects a text to read; next the teacher places students in groups based upon their common choice of text, and last groups meet to establish requirements such as number of meetings, reading schedule and schedule to discuss and respond to text. Students are encouraged to take notes while reading and to share during group discussions. The role of the teacher is to become a facilitator not an instructor. As facilitator, the teacher can evaluate through observations and through students' self-evaluations.

TEACHER-STUDENT CONFERENCE

Overview

Teachers need to schedule consistent and frequent opportunities to meet and talk with each student throughout the school year. Conferences provide teachers opportunities to assess and give feedback to each student's progression of their literacy skills. Conferences create the environment where dialogue and interaction is accepted and encouraged.

Implementation

During conferences, teacher and student need to be engaged by providing suggestions, giving advice, and demonstrating solutions to the writing in which the conference is being held. After collaborating, each person is then encouraged to critique their own writing. Also after each conference, the teacher should take time to reflect on the conference and keep annotated records to assist with locating patterns of errors or misconceptions in students' understanding of various literacy skills. This task allows the teacher to use data to build and/or re-structure daily instruction.

AUTHOR'S CIRCLE

Overview

Students need the opportunity to work with partners in various settings to accomplish personal and/or group goals, and this technique provides such an avenue. Results from conducting author's circle demonstrate an increase in students' respect for one another and their awareness of others' opinions while challenging themselves to strive for higher standards as readers and writers.

Implementation

Students take on roles as author or critical listener. A student is the author when he/she is reading their created text orally to a group/ class, while the other students are expected to listen attentively and provide feedback when the author is finished. The listeners are expected to ask questions based on areas of confusion and/or state areas where additional development is needed. Students are always encouraged to focus on effective elements of the text. The author is then responsible for taking notes based on the feedback provided and is encouraged to implement.

CREATING INDEPENDENT READERS

Overview

The ultimate outcome for all students is to become independent readers. In her book, *When Kids Can't Read: What Teachers Can Do*, Kylene Beers addresses several strategies used by independent readers when confronting a "tough text" verses the lack of strategies used by dependent readers. She states that independent readers figure out quickly what's confusing them and apply strategies but when dependent readers become confused the most common result is to stop reading. She explains that independent readers set goals for getting through texts while dependent readers rely on teachers to set goals. She also identifies that independent readers have the knowledge of and the ability to apply multiple strategies for comprehending text while dependent readers are limited.

Implementation

Teachers need to provide students opportunities to comprehend various texts, to monitor their understanding, to determine meanings of words, to read with fluency, and to develop the stamina to continue reading difficult texts. Teachers need to model by: showing emotions invoked during reading, responding verbally to characters and/or events, using hands and arms for gestures, maintaining eye contact with audience, and finding authors and/or genres of interest through multiple resources.

GRAMMAR IN CONTEXT

Overview

Constance Weaver in her book, *Teaching Grammar in Context*, recommends teaching a *minimum of grammar for maximum benefits*. She states that in the first half of the nineteenth century, learning grammar was mainly the memorization and recitation of "definitions, rules, paradigms, examples, and other grammatical features." It wasn't until the latter half of the nineteenth century, research supported that students needed to be active in their own learning. Weaver suggests that teachers examine their own students' writing, and offer the kinds of

guidance their students need--mostly at the point of need. Grammatical concepts must often be taught and re-taught to individuals as well as to groups or classes, and students may long afterwards continue to need guidance in actually applying what they have, in some sense or to some degree, already learned. There is no quick fix.

Implementation

The following instructional suggestions support teaching grammar in context:

- Engage students in writing, writing, and more writing;
- Immerse students in good literature, including literature that is particularly interesting and challenging syntactically;
- Teach the relevant aspects of grammar within the context of students' writing;
- Emphasize the aspects of grammar that are useful in helping students revise sentences to make them more effective;
- Emphasize aspects of grammar that are useful in helping students edit sentences for conventional mechanics and appropriateness, and
- Teach needed terms, structures, and skills when writers need them, ideally when they are ready to revise at the sentence level or to edit.

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- Fletcher, R. & J. Portalupi. *Writing Workshop: The Essential Guide*. Portsmouth, NH. Heinemann Publishers. 2001.
- Harris, M. *Teaching One-to-One: The Writing Conference*. Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English. 1986.
- National Paideia Center. *The Paideia Seminar: Active Thinking through Dialogue – A Manual*. Greensboro, NC: The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. 2001.
- Tovani, C. *I Read It, but I Don't Get It: Comprehension Strategies for Adolescent Readers*. Portland, ME. Stenhouse Publishers. 2000.
- Weaver, C. *Teaching Grammar in Context*. Portsmouth, NH. 1996.
- Wilhelm, J. *Improving Comprehension with Think A-loud Strategies*. New York. Scholastic. 2001.

Submitted by:
Phyllis Blackmon

Suggested Resources

- Allen, Janet and Patrick Daley. *Read-Aloud Anthology*. New York: Scholastic, 2004.
- Burke, Tricia and Kathy Hartzold. *Guided Reading*. Petersborough: Crystal Springs Books, 2007.
- Daniels, Harvey and Steven Zemelman. *Subjects Matter*. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2004.
- Duffy, Gerald. *Explaining Reading*. New York: Guilford Press, 2003.
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- Richardson, Judy. *Read It Aloud*. International Reading Association, 2000.
- Routman, Regie. *Conversations: Strategies for Teaching, Learning, and Evaluating*. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2000.
- Viorst, Judith. *Rosie and Michael*. New York: First Alladin Paperbacks, 1974.

Suggested Resources (continued)

- Allen, J. *Yellow Brick Roads*. Portsmouth, NH. Stenhouse Publishers. 2000.
- Atwell, N. *Lessons That Change Writers*. Portsmouth, NH. Heinemann Publishers. 2002.
- Beers, K. *When Kids Can't Read: What Teachers Can Do*. Portsmouth, NH. 2003.
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- Weaver, C. *Teaching Grammar in Context*. Portsmouth, NH. 1996.
- Wilhelm, J. *Improving Comprehension with Think-A-loud Strategies*. New York. Scholastic. 2001.

Book Lists

- www.nsta.org/publications/ostb/
- www.ncss.org/resources/notable/
- www.newbridgeonline.com
- www.heinemannclassroom.com
- www.lexile.com
- www.ala.org
- <http://www.ala.org/ala/professionalresources/outr each/booklists/index.cfm>
- <http://bookwizard.scholastic.com/tbw/homePage.d o>

